REMARKS

The Examiner cites in rejecting claims 1-5, 7-8, and 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103 a new combination of art – Cosman in view of Nissen. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Cosman plus Nissen further in view of Taft. Claims 9-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Cosman in view of Nissen further in view of Sekiguchi.

Reconsideration of the art rejection is respectfully requested for the following reasons. Claim 1 recites a selection unit to select a reference point relative to the visualization of the three-dimensional data sets selected by the user, a direction unit to specify a direction from the reference point to the point being selected by the user in the visualization, and a distance unit to set a distance value from the reference point along the direction to the point being selected in the visualization. The Examiner states at page 3, lines 1-3 of the Office Action that Cosman does not teach a distance unit to set a distance value from said reference point along said direction to said point to be selected by the visualization. For this the Examiner cites Nissen. However, Nissen combined with Cosman does not suggest claim 1 for the following reasons.

Nissen teaches a method for resizing and moving an object on a computer screen. The disclosed method involves screen areas (reference numbers 4 and 5 in Figure 2), which are predefined areas of the screen, each used for one particular resizing direction (0012). Each screen area has a reference point. By touching into a screen area a two dimensional vector is defined from the reference point and the touched point (sensed by a sensor point). This vector determines a direction and a degree of resizing of an object on a computer screen (0015 and 0016). As an example, it is disclosed that "a quadrangular frame may be resized in the way that

one of the sides of the quadrangle, or that side of the quadrangle being nearest the sensor point from which an input has been read, is simply moved to the sensor point from which an input has been read" (0016).

Thus, although there are vectors with a certain direction and length (distance value) involved in claim 1 of the present invention and in Nissen's method, the combination does not suggest claim 1 for the following reasons.

First, the object of the vector in Nissen's method is to define a resizing of an object on a computer screen, whereas in claim 1, an input system is provided to select a point in a visualization of a three-dimensional data set. Second, in claim 1, starting from a reference point, a direction and a distance value are used to attain a point to be selected. This is very different from Nissen who requires first to select a point (by touching the screen area) to be able to define a vector. Therefore it would not make sense to use Nissen's method to realize a distance unit to set a distance value from a reference point along a given direction to attain a point to be selected, as the point to be selected would have to be selected first.

In other words, claim 1 of the present invention uses a reference point and a vector to find a point to be selected, whereas Nissen uses two points to define a vector. Accordingly, even if one of ordinary skill in the art would combine Nissen and C Osman, one still would not achieve claim 1.

Furthermore, one skilled in the art would not combine the two documents dealing with different technical fields ("resizing of objects" and "aiding neurosurgery") to solve a problem in a third field ("handling three-dimensional data sets"). The combination could only be a hindsight construction.
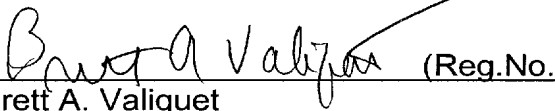
Dependent claims 2-15 are allowable at least for the reasons noted with respect to claim 1 and also by reciting additional features not suggested.

Independent claim 47 distinguishes in a manner similar to claim 1.

Allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or to credit any overpayment to account No. 501519.

Respectfully submitted,

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